The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor, concerning in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WHOLE NO. 1559 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1941 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 21, NO. 8

AFL Survey Says Industrial Peace Is Promoted by Union Agreements

Collective bargaining as a successful method of developing peace in industrial relations and the lack of union agreements as the major element responsible for the workers' loss of working their labor power are emphasized in the current issue of "Labor's Monthly Survey," published by the American Federation of Labor.

"The recent furore over strikes in defense industries has given the American public an utterly false impression," the Survey said. "Newspapers have played up strike stories, often making it appear that labor was at fault. They have failed to know why those strikes occurred; they have ignored the thousands of disputes settled peacefully under union agreements; they have said nothing of the wholehearted cooperation being given by hundreds of thousands of union members in defense production.

"It is time to look at the facts.

"Actually, time lost during strikes in American industry last year was extremely small. It amounted to less than two-hours per worker employed, for the entire year; it was scarcely more than one-third the time lost in 1939, Compared with previous periods, it was less than in any of the last twelve years except 1939 and 1930. When we consider the intense resistance many employers are still making to union organization and collective bargaining, this record is indeed an achievement.

"The major cause of strikes in recent years has been the effort to gain union recognition and negotiate a first agreement; it accounts for 63 per cent of all time lost during the 10, from 1933 to 1939. Nearly all serious strikes in defense industries have been due to this cause. Once an agreement has been signed, the greatest obstacle on the road to industrial peace is past, for the agreement itself provides the means for peaceful settlement of disputes.

"Today, more than 8,000,000 men and women are working under union agreements in the United States. This is more than twice and possibly three times the number under such agreements eight years ago, in fact, union agreements are so widely prevalent today that 01 per cent of all workers are in industries where collective bargaining and signed contracts predominate as the method for dealing with joint labor-management problems.

"This is one reason why strikes are declining; the second is the patriotic efforts being made by American Federation of Labor unions to settle their controversies without stopping work.

"The union agreement is a constitution for democratic government in the workplace. Like it, it provides for a set of laws or rules under which workers and management agree to do business with each other. Practically every agreement provides for joint committees and joint meetings where workers and management can take up grievances and discuss their problems; most agreements provide arbitration for problems which cannot be settled in conference. The vast majority of controversies are quickly settled when workers and management meet in good faith around the conference table. The union agreement thus brings law and order into industrial relations, in contrast to the chaos which so often exists where there is no organization and no agreement.

"Collective bargaining procedure is the very essence of democracy. It depends upon the good faith, fair dealings, integrity of purpose, willingness to live by facts on the part of both parties.

"The working of industrial democracy has already proved its value in industries where collective bargaining has been accepted practice for many years. Where management and workers habitually meet in joint conference in a spirit of good faith, the extension of collective bargaining to include mediation or arbitration, and to active cooperation for better production is a natural consequence. It is part of the democratic process.

"Metal trades unions recently pledged their loyal cooperation to speed defense production, announcing that 'there must be no stoppage of work,' and setting up procedures for conciliation and voluntary arbitration. Building trades unions have made definite sacrifices by reducing overtime pay and limiting initiation fees; they have also refrained from strike policy on defense work. In addition they have supplied 370,000 men for defense jobs, often sending skilled men halfway across the country without charge.

"The railroads, in the last 14 years under the Railway Labor Act, have built peaceful relations to a high degree. Many threatened strikes have been peacefully settled through the facilities provided by the Act. About 90 per cent of railroad workers today are under union agreement and 90 per cent of agreements having increased from 3,021 in 1935 to 4,193 in 1940.

AFL Chartering Ford Plant Unions; Green Visions Drive's Big Success

Miami, Fla.—Henry Ford "must ultimately bow to the inevitable" and sign collective bargaining agreements with labor unions. This militant statement was made here by William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, with the prediction that probably within six months most of the 100,000 employes of the Ford Motor Company would be members of A. F. of L. unions.

Already, according to Mr. Green, "a great many" Ford employes had been enrolled in unions affiliated with the A. F. of L. Charters had been issued for formation of such unions at the River Rouge plant in Dearborn, the Lincoln plant in Detroit, and the Kansas City plant, he said.

The Ford drive, he stated, was one of the largest ever undertaken by the Federation.

In telling about the A. F. of L.'s organization campaign in the Ford Motor Company's plants, Mr. Green said that its drive was being carried on with the cooperation of workers inside the plants. The employes, he said ,were being formed into Federal labor unions.

The American Federation of Labor, Mr. Green declared, would not conduct the type of "loud campaign, with the denunciation and discrimination carried on by the C. I. O."

A campaign such as the C. I. O.'s, he said, would create disunity among the workers and between the workers and the Ford management.

Describing the drive for the Ford campaign, Mr. Green said that last month committees of Ford employes from the River Rogue, Lincoln and Kansas City plants visited him in Washington and requested charters. Their numbers were insufficient, and a charter was refused at that time.

However, he said, they returned early this month with additional names, so charters were issued.

In the issuance of Federal charters to these employes, Mr. Green said, agreement was with the A. F. L. which had jurisdiction over the organizing of auto workers. He emphasized that the "exclusive jurisdiction agreement" there had been no conflict between the Federation and the United Automobile Workers of America, A. F. L. affiliate.

Since the organization movement began, he asserted, a "very large number of Ford employes" had signed union membership cards.

"And we believe we long that the majority of the employes in these plants will become members of these Federal locals," he added.

"In my judgment it is only a question of time until the A. F. L. will be established in the Ford plants and we will then call on the company to recognize our organization as the collective bargaining spokesman for the workers. It is our hope that the company will do so, as it has in the overwhelming. Then collective bargaining will be inaugurated for the first time by the company."

Mr. Green made it clear that craft unions would not be established here, such as pattern makers, building trades workers, machinists and others, but would be enrolled in new Federal locals. They would be assigned to their own craft organizations, he added.

Larger Social Security Coverage Urged in Board's Annual Report

Washington, D. C.—Amending the Social Security Act to extend the coverage to reach new classes of beneficiaries, together with increases in allowances and participation by the Federal Government in direct-relief programs administered by the States, were recommended in the annual report of the Social Security Board.

In forwarding the report to Congress, Paul V. McNutt, Federal Security Administrator, said that a well-rounded social security program is a necessary bulwark to national morale."

Specific recommendations of the Social Security Board included:

Insurance benefits for protection against wage loss due to physical disability.

Extension of old age and survivor insurance to include most of the major occupational groups not now in it, the agricultural and domestic workers and employes of non-profit, charitable and educational institutions.

Broadening the base of the Federal unemployment compensation tax to cover employers of eight or more persons. This type of coverage now prevails in the District of Columbia and several States, under State social security legislation, but generally the tax reaches employers of eight or more persons. Such coverage is now in operation or carried out on a "matching" basis.

Revision of present public assistance provisions for aged persons, dependent children, and blind, to supplant the equal-matching plan with an arrangement by which the size of the Federal contribution would be determined by the economic capacity of the State to pay.

"Present payments under all public assistance programs are least adequate where the need is greatest," the report says, pointing to the Federal Government pays half of what a State pays up to $40 monthly for aged recipients and $30 and $15 up to $18 for the first dependent child in a family, and up to $12 for each additional child. The Social Security Board proposes the $40 base apply to the first child.

In proposing to put the Federal Government back in the field of direct relief, which was abandoned in 1935, the report says:

"Some States have used an undue share of their available funds for one or more of the special types of assistance for which matching Federal grants are available, to the detriment of provision of general relief for other needy persons in the community. General relief is a necessary supplement to the special types of assistance now provided under the Social Security Act and is also needed to supplement social insurance measures until coverage becomes more general and to meet situations, which fall outside the necessarily specific provisions of an insurance system."

It adds that "Federal grants to the States for general relief, under the safeguards appropriated to the use of Federal funds, would afford a relatively inexpensive means of offsetting deficiencies and gaps in other aspects of the social security program and, it is believed, a more equitable distribution of both State and Federal funds among all needy groups."

AFL Denies Charge Made By Arnold That Unions Boost Cost of Living

Miami, Fla.—The charge made by Assistant Attorney General Thurman Arnold before the House of Representatives investigating committee that the practices of organized labor are increasing the nation's bill for food and defense purposes has hampered defense efforts, was positively denied here by William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, who said that the A. F. of L. Executive Council's complete exposure of the fallacy of Arnold's claim had been sent to the Judiciary Committee.

Mr. Arnold told the House committee that the tendency of union practices was to increase prices," Mr. Green declared. "We were amazed at this line of testimony and we are of the opinion that Mr. Arnold has mixed his facts.

"It is our opinion that the increase of costs and services rendered by him to the action of the unions are attributable to other causes."

Mr. Green asserted that Mr. Arnold's allegations that curtain labor practices were hampering the defense program were untrue. He reiterated his earlier opposition to the application of the anti-trust laws to labor, saying that if labor were guilty of law-breaking other statutes were applicable and these should be invoked.

St. Lawrence Seaway Plan Opposed By American Federation of Labor

Miami, Fla.—Before adjourning its midwinter session here, the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor adopted a motion opposing the St. Lawrence seaway project, Harrison Combs, secretary-treasurer and Matthew Woll, vice presidents, and George Meany, secretary-treasurer, were named to present to be sent to members of Congress.

Mr. Harrison, chairman of the committee, said that the recent A. F. L. convention authorized the Executive Council to investigate the St. Lawrence waterway project. The result was that the Council, with one dissenting vote, decided to oppose the project for these reasons:

There is no economic justification for the project.

The major benefits from the project would accrue to Canada while the greater part of the expense would be assumed by the United States.

The project would not benefit agricultural groups because their exportable surplus of products leaves the farmers' fields and is sold to others before the products are exported. Whatever benefits might accrue from water transportation would go to speculators and brokers.

The project cannot be self-sustaining and will require additional expenditures of public funds, which would mean further burdens on taxpayers.

News Briefs

AFL COUNCIL POSTPONES CHARTERS FOR 2 UNIONS

Miami, Fla.—The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor, at its mid-winter meeting here, postponed granting a national charter to the Federal unions in the grain processing industry, claiming 17,000 members, because it wished to make sure that these unions did not manufacture men who should come under the jurisdiction of other national unions.

The Council also ruled that the time had not yet arrived to grant a national charter to nearly 100 Federal office workers' unions claiming 10,000 members.

WAGE-HOUR UNIT NAMED FOR RUBBER PRODUCTS

Washington, D. C.—Gen. Philip B. Fleming, Administrator of the Wage-Hour Division of the Department of Labor, announced the appointment of a committee of fifteen for the rubber products industry, including industry, with authority to recommend minimum wages up to 40 cents an hour for the employes. Of the 130,000 workers in the industry, it is estimated that approximately 10,000 are now paid less than 40 cents an hour.

The committee consists of an equal number of representatives of employers, employes and the public. Arthur T. Martin, dean of the law school, Ohio State University, heads the committee. Frank P. Fenton, director of organization, American Federation of Labor, is one of the employes' representatives.

MANY DEFENSE WORKERS TO LIVE IN TRAILERS

Washington, D. C.—The Senate Appropriation Sub-Committee approved a plan to house thousands of defense workers in mobile trailers. Senator Adams of Colorado, chairman of the sub-committee, said $6,270,000 was provided for temporary housing, including the trailers, after C. F. Palmer, coordinator of defense housing, explained the program.

"They told us that they could provide 'dormitory' housing in industrial centers and new powder plants with the Senator Adams said. "But dormitory housing was being constructed," the Senator said. "They said these units could be moved on trains, trucks or on their own wheels."

The trailers will be fitted with lights and all conveniences and can be produced, Senator Adams said, at a cost of about $1,000, although they now cost about $4,000 each.

MINIMUM WAGES FIXED FOR CARPET INDUSTRY

Approval of the recommendations for minimum wages in the carpet and rug industry made by the committee which conducted the inquiry was announced by General Philip B. Fleming, administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, United States Department of Labor.

The committee recommended that those employes engaged in the "wool section" of the industry be paid not less than 32½ cents an hour, and workers employed in the "other than wool section" be paid not less than 30 cents an hour. The wage order establishing these minimum wage rates will be issued to be effective March 17.

It is estimated that there are 81,000 workers employed in the carpet and rug industry, of which number 1,100 are now receiving less than the minimum wage contained in the committee recommendations.

LAND SETTLEMENT URGED AS UNEMPLOYMENT REMEDY

A back-to-the- land movement as one permanent remedy for unemployment is advocated by Mgr. Luigi G. Ligutti, leader of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference. He cites his own success with fifty poor families, mostly miners, in a parish he recently left in Granger, Iowa.

Formerly these families lived in typical company camps and many had been on public relief. But they settled on 254 acres in a homestead project where they began to buy cooperatively. "I figured the other day," Mgr. Ligutti said, "that in the last five years tax payers had been saved fully $18,000 because these families have become self-sufficient."

TAX EXEMPT PROVISION ENDED FOR BABY BONDS

The United States Treasury announces that income from baby bonds issued after March 1 will not be exempt from taxation. The new announcement was made following the action of Congress in raising the Federal debt limit from $49,000,000,000 to $65,000,000,000 and authorizing the President to issue wholly taxable securities.

Under the new regulation the income from baby bonds issued after March 1 will be subject to the same Federal taxation as income from private securities. Income from baby bonds is realized, and consequently taxable, only when they mature or are sold back to the Government.

AFL Will Fight Anti-Trust Suits Against Organized Labor Movement

"This board has been established in recognition of the importance of both short and long term planning of the defense effort and its effect on the national economy as a whole," Biggers said.

It should provide valuable assistance in the task of distributing the defense load so that the quickest possible results can be obtained with the least possible dislocation—now or later—of the nation's economic life."

MEANY IS APPOINTED TO PLANNING BOARD

Washington, D. C.—Harry L. Hopkins, former Secretary of Commerce and President Roosevelt's recent personal emmissary to Great Britain, was appointed a member of the Office of Production Management's Production Planning Board. The eight other members of the board, which will be under the direction of Production Chief John D. Biggers, include a representative of the Navy, the Army, organized labor and industry.

George Meany, secretary-treasurer of the American Federation of Labor, was included in the labor section of the committee.

The O. P. M. said the board will advise Biggers on "industrial planning during the emergency and post-emergency readjustments."

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AFL COUNCIL OPPOSES DIRKSEN MARITIME BILL

Miami, Fla.—The Executive Council, of the American Federation of Labor, at its mid-winter session here, expressed opposition to certain provisions of the Dirksen maritime bill under consideration by the House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries.

The position of the Executive Council was outlined in a letter to Harry Lundeberg, president of the Seafarers' International Union, scheduled to appear before the House committee when hearings are resumed.

The letter stated that the Council opposed the establishment of hiring halls for seamen under Federal shipping commissioners, and disapproved other proposals to have seamen furnished with "continuous discharge" books and of the proposal aimed at breaking up the establishment of union propaganda by seamen. The objective of the Dirksen provision met with the Council's approval, said Mr. Green, but the section should be rewritten to make it clear that it did not ban distribution of union literature.

UNION AND MANAGEMENT COOPERATION DISCUSSED

Miami, Fla.—A resolution on the extension of cooperation between labor unions and management introduced at the 1940 convention of the American Federation of Labor was discussed by the A. F. of L. Executive Council during its mid-winter meeting here. The resolution, sponsored by fifteen unions active in the railway industry, directed Mr. Green to create a committee "to plan for a practical way to counsel union management undertakings."

The resolution was not adopted by the convention but was referred to the Executive Council, which directed the Federation officers to confer with those interested in furthering cooperation between unions and management. The officers were requested to obtain all information possible and to report at the spring meeting of the Council in Washington.

In connection with this resolution, Mr. Green explained that the union-management cooperation plan on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad had been furthered by the railway unions, under direction of Otto S. Beyer, an engineer, a member of the National Mediation Board.

Executive Council Promises Resistance in Reply to Arnold's Testimony Before TNEC

Miami, Fla.—The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor will continue to resist, with all the power and services at its command, the Department of Justice's "perversion of the anti-trust laws" by seeking to apply them to organized labor. This uncompromising position was made clear by the A. F. of L. Executive Council in a reply to Assistant Attorney General Thurman Arnold, who recently made charges of "labor abuses" before the Temporary National Economic Committee and the House of Representatives Judiciary Committee.

The Executive Council's statement, forwarded to the TNEC by William Green, president of the A. F. of L., said its analysis of Mr. Arnold's testimony indicated the Assistant Attorney General had been disappointed in the Supreme Court's decision throwing out the indictment in the anti-trust case which he initiated against President William L. Hutcheson and other officers of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners.

The Council began its reply by condemning Mr. Arnold's testimony as "subtle propaganda based on distortion of fact and law which was 'unjustified by the facts and a misconstruction of free labor unions in their lawful pursuits."

The reply took up Mr. Arnold's alleged statements that, as a result of the power conferred on the unions arising from the Supreme Court decision in the recent carpenters case, the labor organizations were inevitably moving toward a labor "dictatorship."

Explaining the Council's position, Mr. Green said that the charge by Mr. Arnold assumed what could not be proved, that every union which engaged in a jurisdictional dispute "is prepared to make ruthless use of its economic power."

Mr. Arnold's thesis, it was asserted, meant that there must not be a strong, well-organized union workers despite the desires of many workers for such an organization.

Continuing to read excerpts from the document, Mr. Green said that the Council's opinion was that the Department of Justice's anti-trust division "did not intend to be restricted by the Supreme Court" but that it intended "to go on prosecuting labor although the Supreme Court rejected the grounds on which its prosecution was initiated."

Quoting what purported to be Mr. Arnold's testimony, Mr. Green asserted that the Assistant Attorney General maintained that an agreement between employers and employes to employ only men than are needed would be a conspiracy in restraint of trade and that the employer would be criminally liable if it negotiated such a contract.

Mr. Green called attention to a statement attributed to Mr. Arnold purporting to acknowledge that the labor movement had not demanded legislation on labor matters and that the anti-trust department departments were primarily involved in labor policy.

The latter addition in the letter to the TNEC, said that it was "unfortunate" that Mr. Arnold had not solicited the advice of the other government departments before he launched his unprecedented campaign.

The letter added:

"Congress, which makes our labor policy as well as other policies, expressly approved the right of labor to pursue by peaceful means its self-interest as late as 1935, when, in Section 7 of the Wagner act, it stated that employes shall have the right to engage in concerted activities for mutual aid or protection.

"This, in our opinion, Mr. Arnold not only seeks to deny but declares it a crime. The A. F. of L. will continue to resist this perversion of the anti-trust laws of the anti-trust division of the Department of Justice with all the power and the resources at its command."

Knudsen Opposes Strike Curb Law; Unnecessary For Defense, He Says

Washington, D. C.—The importance of strikes in the national defense program was minimized by William S. Knudsen, Director of the Office of Production Management, in a statement before the House Judiciary Committee. He declared that no legislation was needed to deal with industrial disputes in defense industries and positively advised against anti-strike laws.

Mr. Knudsen told the committee he did not consider the strike situation in defense industries as serious and expressed the belief that industrial disputes would decline as the defense plan progressed and as "management decides to accept the laws the unions have written."

With regard to sabotage, he said it was "not much of a problem," and added that the Federal Bureau of Investment of Justice has all the law and staff necessary to handle all subversive activities.

Although convinced that "a cooling-off period" should precede the calling of strikes, Mr. Knudsen told this provision should be contained in an agreement between the union and the employer rather than in statute law.

"If a strike has been building up over a long period," he added, "nobody is going to cool off very much."

Describing the defense delays caused by strikes as "not important," Mr. Knudsen said that the defense program as a whole is "not being seriously hampered" by lack of cooperation either from capital or labor.

"Production is building up steadily," he added, "but necessarily I am not satisfied and don't expect to be. But I have no complaints."

TEAMSTERS MAY MOVE OFFICES TO WASHINGTON

Indianapolis, Ind.—John M. Gillespie, assistant to President Daniel J. Tobin of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers of America for twenty-five years, was elected secretary-treasurer of the union at a meeting of the International Executive Board, Mr. Tobin announced.

It was also revealed by Mr. Tobin that the Executive Board considered removal of union headquarters from Indianapolis to Washington and instructed him to investigate building conditions there.

3-YEAR CONTRACT WON BY N. Y. DRESSMAKERS

New York, N. Y.—A three-year contract between the Dress Joint Board of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union, A. F. of L., affiliate, and four employer associations in the dress industry was signed at the City Hall here, Mayor F. H. La Guardia, who presided at the meeting, said the agreement expressed a new era in labor relations here and that a fifth group which had refused to sign to do so promptly.

The agreement, affecting 60,000 workers in 1400 shops, guarantees that the garments shall be made under fair working conditions by workers paid decent wages, includes an effective enforcement staff by the union has a voice in fixing management standards to avoid the tendency of low earnings under piece work, the plant organization and inadequate equipment, and sets up a permanent plan under which the industry and labor will cooperate in raising from $3,000,000 to $4,500,000 the fund next three years for promotion and publicity to establish New York City as the fashion center of the world. There is also a provision for five hours of overtime a week.

TELEGRAPH WORKERS JOIN AFL AFFILIATE

Miami, Fla.—The significant progress made by the Commercial Telegraphers Union backed by the American Federation of Labor in the drive to organize 25,000 employes of the Western Union Telegraph Company was revealed here by William Green, A. F. of L. president. The Western Union's company union was recently ordered dissolved.

In less than six months, Mr. Green said, the A. F. of L. had obtained the adherence of the majority of the 15,000 Western Union employes in New York City.

RAMSPECK ASKS PENSIONS FOR MORE U. S. EMPLOYES

Washington, D. C.—A bill which would blanket under the Civil Service Retirement Act all employes under the executive, judicial and legislative branches of the Government not already covered by some other retirement system was introduced by Chairman Ramspeck of the House of Representatives Civil Service Committee.

Each person covered by the legislation would be obliged to contribute an income of from 2½ per cent up to 5 per cent of his salary. The President would have the authority to exclude from the operation of the proposed law any officer or employe or group whose tenure of office or employment is intermittent or of uncertain duration.

All persons covered by the proposed amendments in the new Ramspeck bill would have the right to retire at the age of 60 after 20 years of service. Retirement at the age of 70 would be mandatory, except in cases of employes in the legislative branch.

UNION LABEL MOTOR OIL ON MARKET IN 3 AREAS

Washington, D. C.—The Union Label Trades Department of the American Federation of Labor announced that "Unol" is the registered trade mark of a new motor oil carrying the union label of the International Union of Operating Engineers. "Mayor of La Guardia, who presided at the meeting, said the agreement expressed a new era in labor relations here and that a fifth group which had refused to sign to do so promptly.

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SENATE UNIT CONSIDERS SUFFRAGE FOR D. OF C.

Washington, D. C.—Senator McCarran, chairman of a special committee to handle the resolution introduced jointly by Senator Capper and Representative Sumners for a proposed constitutional amendment extending suffrage to the District of Columbia, promised full and complete hearings on this long-standing controversial question.

Since 1874 the laws for the government of the nation's capital have been passed by Congress sitting as a sort of municipal council. The laws are administered by three commissioners appointed by the President. No one in the District of Columbia has a vote or any effective voice in determining the laws enacted or in exercising or the selection of the officials to administer them.

The Capper-Sumners resolution does not in itself extend the vote to the District of Columbia, but would amend the Federal Constitution to vest in Congress the power to deal with the question. Under the amendment Congress could give the District representation in both Houses of Congress and in the electoral college and could also delegate to the local municipal government such additional powers as it deemed appropriate.

CHARTER PETITIONS DENIED

Miami, Fla.—The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor refused applications for union charters by part-suitout employes, on the ground that exercising Judge William Green, president of the A. F. of L., said the practice was found to be too closely connected with gambling.

The Executive Council also refused a similar petition by a group of Louisville lawyers. It was stated they were not wage earners, but were fee-charging professional men.